

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7568

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0150

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BC, US, AO

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT KHAMA'S COMMENTS ON ANGOLA AND OTHER

SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

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1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT KHAMA SEEMS VERY APPREHENSIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MOTIVES IN DEPARTING FROM ITS POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF NEIGHBORING STATES AS REFLECTED IN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. SOUTH AFRICAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA HAS BADLY DIVIDED AFRICAN STATES. PRESIDENT NOT AWARE OF ANY NEW INITIATIVES BY AFRICANS IN THE LIGHT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PULLBACK TO "BORDER AREAS". BELIEVES MORE AFRICAN STATES WILL RECOGNIZE THE MPLA IF IT ACHIEVES MILITARY VICTORY. SEES SOVIET PRESENCE IN ANGOLA AS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO CONTROL SOUTH AFRICA OTHER THAN AS BASE TO SUBVERT OTHER AFRICAN STATES. BELIEVES SOVIETS IN ANY CASE WILL EVENTUALLY BE DISLODGED FROM ANGOLA SINCE THEY TEND TO OVERPLAY THEIR HAND IN AFRICA. IAN SMITH STILL INTRANSIGENT ON THE RHODESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM IN SPITE OF SITUATION IN ANGOLA. POSSIBLE BOTSWANA WOULD RECOGNIZE MPLA IF IT GAINS CONTROL OVER ANGOLAN TERRITORY. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MEETING WITH ME AT STATE HOUSE JANUARY 28, PRESIDENT SIR SERETSE KHAMA COMMENTED ON THE ANGOLAN SITUATION, RHODESIA, REFUGEES AND BANTUSTANS.

3. ANGOLA. THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET AND CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA AND WONDERED WHETHER THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD OR WOULD WITHDRAW COMPLETELY. HE SAID CUBAN INTERVENTION WAS PUZZLING. SOVIET PRESENCE WAS UNDERSTANDABLE IN VIEW OF THEIR ASSISTANCE TO MPLA FREEDOM FIGHTERS OVER THE YEARS. SOUTH AFRICA'S MOTIVES FOR INTERVENING WERE NOT CLEAR. ITS INTERVENTION HAD BADLY DIVIDED AFRICAN STATES ON THE RECOGNITION ISSUE. AT LEAST HALF OF THE AFRICAN STATES WHICH HAD RECOGNIZED THE MPLA DID SO SIMPLY BECAUSE OF SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION. PRESIDENT WONDERED WHY SOUTH AFRICA FOUND IT NECESSARY TO UNDERTAKE MILITARY ACTION IN ANGOLA TO PROTECT RUACUNA AND CALUEQUE WATER COMPLEX SINCE IT HAD NOT DONE SO IN THE CASE OF CABORRA BASSA IN MOZANBIQUE.

4. I TOLD PRESIDENT THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD NOT CONSULTED WITH US ABOUT ITS ACTIONS IN ANGOLA. USG WAS FULLY IN ACCORD WITH THE GOB VIEW CALLING FOR A CEASEFIRE, WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES AND A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. I TOLD HIM THE MASSIVE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY ACTION TO IMPOSE MPLA ON THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE
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WAS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN TO THE USG AND UNACCEPTABLE. I ADDED THAT THE MAGNITUDE OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS ULTIMATE INTENTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

5. I ASKED THE PRESIDENT IF AFRICAN STATES PLAN ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN VIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PULLBACK TO "BORDER AREAS". PRESIDENT SAID THERE WAS LITTLE AFRICAN STATES COULD DO AT THIS TIME TO INFLUENCE THE SITUATION; THEY WERE STILL BADLY DIVIDED. PRESIDENT

CALLED MY ATTENTION TO HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENTS KAUNDA, NYERERE AND SAMORA MACHEL FOLLOWING THE RECENT OAU SUMMIT. PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE AND KAUNDA COULD NOT MOVE SAMORA MACHEL; HE WAS ADAMANT IN HIS SUPPORT OF THE MPLA. PRESIDENT ASSERTED THAT JULIUS NYERERE FELT SOME OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT SAMORA MACHEL IN VIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE THE GOT HAD PROVIDED FRELIMO FREEDOM FIGHTERS. PRESIDENT LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT NYERERE DIDN'T FEEL THAT STRONG ABOUT THE MATTER.

6. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT MORE AFRICAN STATES WOULD RECOGNIZE THE MPLA IF IT ACHIEVED A MILITARY VICTORY IN ANGOLA. HE COMMENTED THAT ONCE THE MPLA WAS INSTALLED IT COULD NOT BE DISLODGED EXCEPT BY A COUP. PRESIDENT ADDED THAT ONLY IN BOTSWANA AND GAMBIA WERE THERE FREE ELECTIONS IN AFRICA.

7. I ASKED THE PRESIDENT ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO PUBLIC STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER VORSTER INDICATING THAT THE SOVIETS WERE TRYING TO ESTABLISH A ROW OF MARXIST STATES FROM ANGOLA TO TANZANIA. PRESIDENT SAID THE UNITED STATES KNEW MORE ABOUT THE SOVIET INTENTIONS THAT HE DID. HE THOUGHT THE SOVIETS WERE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING A NAVAL BASE IN ANGOLA AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO CONTROL THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. PRESIDENT DID NOT SEEM TO THINK THAT INSTALLATION OF THE MPLA WITH THE HELP OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS WOULD NECESSARILY MEAN RUSSIAN OR COMMUNIST DOMINATION. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE DID NOT KNOW OF A SINGLE AFRICAN STATE THAT HAD ADOPTED COMMUNISM. IN FACT, RUSSIANS HAD EVENTUALLY BEEN KICKED OUT OF EVERY AFRICAN STATE WHERE THEY HAD ESTABLISHED SOME INFLUENCE; THEY TENDED TO OVERPLAY THEIR HAND.

8. PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY LEGWAILA, WHO ATTENDED MEETING, SAID MANY FARICAN STATES OUTSIDE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA SAW SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA AS HELPFUL IN SETTING UP PRESSURE
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FOR THE LIBERATION OF NAMIBIA AND INDUCING SOUTH AFRICA TO MODIFY ITS APARTHEID POLICIES. HE INDICATED THAT MANY AFRICANS HAD GREAT ABHORRENCE OF APARTHEID AND WERE LESS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE. PRESIDENT COMMENTED THAT SOVIETS AND CUBANS WERE NOT LIKELY TO TAKE ON SOUTH AFRICA BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF WESTERN INTERVENTION. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT WESTERN POWERS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO VIEW SOVIET AGGRESSION IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN WITH GRAVE CONCERN.

9. RHODESIA. I NOTED THAT THE ANGOLAN SITUATION WOULD PRESUMABLY MAKE SMITH MORE FORTHCOMING IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH NKOMO ON THE RHODESAIN CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM. PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD WORKED HARD TO UNIFY THE ANC IN COOPERATION WITH PRESIDENTS KAUNDA, NYERERE AND SAMORA MACHEL; THIS EFFORT HAD NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL. BISHOP MUZOREWA HAD DECLARED THAT THE EXTERNAL WING OF THE ANC WOULD NOT

ACCEPT ANY DEAL NEGOTIATED BY NKOMO WITH SMITH. PRESIDENT SAID HE FOUND MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE'S POSTURE PUZZLING. HE NOTED THAT THE WHITE RHODESIANS WERE ALSO BADLY DIVIDED. SMITH WAS STILL UNDER PRESSURE FROM HIS RIGHT WING; HE WAS INTRANSIGENT AS EVER. PRESIDENT SAID NKOMO HAD RECENTLY BRIEFED HIM ON HIS TALKS WITH SMITH. ACCORDING TO NKOMO, THE EXCHANGES HAD CONCENTRATED SO FAR ON PROCEDURAL MATTERS; NEGOTIATIONS ON SUBSTANCE HAD NOT YET STARTED. PRESIDENT THEN NOTED THAT DR. ELLIOTT GABELLAH, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXTERNAL WING OF THE ANC, HAD JUST ARRIVED IN GABORONE. HE PLANNED TO SEE GABELLAH ON JANUARY 29.

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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10. REFUGEES. IN COMMENTING ON THE RHODESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS, PRESIDENT KHAMA SAID THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT INFLUX OF REFUGEES FROM RHODESIA LAST SUMMER. MANY HAD BEEN MOVED OUT TO ZAMBIA. THE PRESIDENT ADDED IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN AN INFLOW OF REFUGEES FROM ANGOLA AS A RESULT OF THE PRESENT CIVIL WAR IN THAT COUNTRY.

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11. BANTUSTANS. I NOTED THAT CHIEF MANGOPE OF BOPHUTHATSWANA HAD JUMPED ON THE INDEPENDENCE BANDWAGON. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD NOT TALKED WITH MANGOPE AND WENT TO TO COMMENT ON THE TANSKEI SITUATION ALONG THE LINES OF THE INFORMATION IN GABORONE'S 1416 OF OCTOBER 17, 1975. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED DOUBT WHETHER ANY OAU MEMBER STATE WOULD RECOGNIZE THE TRANSKEI EVEN IF IT ACHIEVED TRUE INDEPENDENCE, WHICH HE SEEMED TO DOUBT.

12. COMMENT: I GAINED IMPRESSION HHAT PRESIDENT VERY CONCERNED ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S APPARENT DEPARTURE FROM ITS POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF NEIGHBORING STATES AND ITS DECISION TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION IN ANGOLA TO PROTECT WHAT IT PERCEIVED TO BE ITS NATIONAL INTEREST. AS SEEN BY OFFICIALS HERE, THIS APPARENT NEW SOUTH AFRICAN POSTURE HAS GRAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTSWANA'S FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE. FROM BOTSWANA VANTAGE POINT PRESIDENT CLEARLY SAW SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT AS MORE SERIOUS THAN THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA. HE DID NOT SEEM TO FEEL THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD USE ANGOLA AS A BASE TO SUBVERT OTHER NEIGHGBORING AFRICAN STATES. HE APPARENTLY BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIETS WILL EVENTUALLY BE DISLODGED IN ANY CASE SINCE THEY ARE LIKELY TO OVERPLAY THEIR HAND NOT ONLY IN ANGOLA BUT ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. THE TRULY NON-ALIGNED AFRICAN STATES WOULD THEREFORE ACHIEVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT BOTSWANA WOULD RECOGNIZE THE MPLA IF IT ACHIEVED A MILITARY VICTORY IN ANGOLA PARTICULARLY IF OAU MOVED IN THAT DIRECTION. GOB WOULD PROBABLY PREFER A UNITED ANGOLA UNDER THE MPLA TO A DIVIDED COUNTRY SUPPORTED BY VARIOUS EXTRATERRITORIAL POWERS. SUCH A SOLUTION, AS MANY BATSWANA SEE IT, WOULD PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF SOUTH AFRICA; IT WOULD CONFIRM THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIEW THAT DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS IN SOUTHERN AFRIA CANNOT LIVE TOGETHER AND THEREFORE SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT OR APARTHEID IS A SOUND POLICY. DISMEMBERMENT OF COUNTRIES IS ALSO AGAINST OAU PRINCIPLES WHICH PRESIDENT KHAMA STRONGLY SUPPORTS.

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